



Luigi Cortes wows the audience and judges to be named the winner of “Sparkling Tour 2006”

During an evening to rival the glamour and suspense of any “American Idol” show, ten of Aruba’s youth displayed remarkable singing talent and stage presence for the final leg in the “Sparkling Tour 2006” series. Winnowing down hundreds of young hopefuls to twenty-five contenders, the series of three evenings telecast live on TeleAruba, the national TV network resulted in nineteen-year-old Luigi Cortes taking home the grand prize of 35,000 Aruban florins, (\$20,000.)

Luigi impressed the judges and thrilled the audience as he channeled a Marc Anthony hit with his exciting voice and charismatic stage presence. Taking second place and a round trip to Paramaribo, Surinam was Griseldys Rodgers Acosta, and in third place and winning 3,000 Aruban florins was Jaderick Croes, performing traditional songs of the region, quite a variation on the usual pop performances, and at seventeen showing an appreciation for the island music.

The final show kept up the suspense and offered an evening filled with incredible performances as they first announced the ten semi-finalists, who gave their all, before bringing back the last five to compete for the title. The finalists included Kimberly Dijkhoff and Bernadith Corpuz, who took fourth and fifth place, respectively. They also both proved that good things come in little packages, as the two diminutive competitors had voice and talent that filled an Entertainment Center that was packed to capacity. Internationally known Aruban musician Hildward Croes, along with other professionals, provided the back-up that also contributed to the quality of the performances and production.

Last year’s winner of the first Sparkling Tour, Roberto Zeeuw, made a special appearance and repeated his award winning performance. He has made a success of his win, and is using it as a stepping-stone to a career in music, and performed along with the superstars of the Soul Beach Music Festival this year.

Congratulations to all the winners, Luigi Cortes in particular. In the words of the competition’s theme song, may all the performers continue to “Shine like a star!”